

LEARNING TOGETHER ABOUT UNIVERSAL SCREENING

Purpose	Elementary school principals can use this tool to plan a staff meeting to review the purpose and components of a universal screening program and engage staff in discussion of current practices and ways to screen students more effectively. The tool can be adapted to introduce universal screening as a new practice or to refine existing implementation.
Materials	<p><i>Assisting Students Struggling With Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades</i>, Recommendation 1 (pp. 13-18). Review this Practice Guide recommendation to learn about using universal screening to identify students who are at risk for reading difficulties and who might need more instruction.</p> <p><i>PaTTAN Universal Screening Presentation</i>, available in the DWW “Related Links” section.</p> <p><i>Screening Tools Chart</i>. Hand out this sample material from the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) as a resource to help schools select screening instruments.</p>
Media	<p><i>Universal Screening for All Students</i>. Watch this multimedia overview to learn about the recommended components of an effective screening system and the use of benchmarks and cut-points to identify at-risk students. (6:19 min)</p> <p><i>Screening All Students</i>. Dr. Donald Compton, Vanderbilt University. Watch this expert interview to learn about how universal screening fits into a multi-tiered intervention system and how to identify students at risk for reading problems and place them into appropriate interventions. (5:54 min)</p> <p><i>Implementing a Screening Program</i>. Dr. Donald Compton, Vanderbilt University. Watch this expert interview to learn how schools can set up a screening program, select appropriate benchmarks, and set cut-points tailored to their student populations. (5:59 min)</p>
Topic	Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading
Practice	Universal Screening

Learning Together About Universal Screening

Planning the Meeting

Plan a staff meeting at the beginning of the school year, allowing at least two hours to cover this topic. The first part of the meeting should consist of presentation and discussion, while the second part should be used to engage staff in reflection and planning activities.

Pre-Meeting Preparation

1. Provide staff with a copy of the Practice Guide, *Assisting Students Struggling With Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades*, and assign Recommendation 1 (pp. 13-18) as reading.
2. Make copies of Pennsylvania's *Screening Planning Worksheet* and Iowa's *Screening Quality Indicators* chart (included in this tool) for staff to use during the meeting.
3. Make copies of Pennsylvania's *Screening Selection Worksheet* and Iowa's *Assessment Quality Indicators and Characteristics* chart (included in this tool) to hand out as resources at the end of the meeting.
4. Print copies of the *Screening Tools Chart* from the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) to hand out as a resource at the end of the meeting.
5. Print a few copies of the *PaTTAN Universal Screening Presentation* (found in DWW's "Related Links" section) to provide as a school resource for staff to use independently after the meeting. Also provide the url for staff who prefer to view online or print a personal copy:
<http://www.pattan.net/files/Handouts09/UniversalScreening033009.pdf>

Meeting Part 1 – Presentation and Discussion

1. Watch the multimedia overview to build on what staff learned about universal screening from the Practice Guide. Clarify the staff's understanding of the purpose, components, and implementation of a screening program. If universal screening is new to the school, you may need to allow for an extended question-and-answer period addressing basic concepts and rationale supporting the practice.
2. Show the universal screening expert interviews with Dr. Donald Compton. Use the key points outlined in Dr. Compton's interviews and the multimedia overview to guide small group discussion. Be sure to spend sufficient time discussing how benchmarks and cut-points are used in screening, as this may be a new practice for many staff members. Follow up with large group share-out to clarify staff understanding and address concerns. Topics for discussion include:
 - Universal screening's purpose and place in a multi-tiered intervention system.
 - Need for structured, data-driven assessment and the important role of teacher judgment for identifying students at risk for reading difficulties.
 - Importance of reliable, valid instruments to accurately identify at-risk students.

- Using benchmarks and setting cut-point scores to identify children at risk for reading difficulties.
- Selecting measures of appropriate reading skills for grades K–2.
- Components necessary for implementing a screening program.

Meeting Part 2 – Staff Reflection Activities

1. Review current screening practices at the school and ask staff to reflect on their role.
 - If the school is new to this practice, ask staff to reflect on how their role may change as a result of instituting a universal screening program.
 - For schools already conducting universal screening, ask staff to explore how this practice has resulted in changes in roles and how interventions are provided to struggling readers.
2. Hand out copies of Pennsylvania's *Screening Planning Worksheet* and Iowa's *Screening Quality Indicators* chart. Ask staff to break into small groups and discuss the screening activities, characteristics, and quality indicators listed. Talk about how these materials can help schools establish a universal screening program or refine a universal screening program that is already being implemented.
3. Reconvene the large group to discuss and plan next steps for implementing universal screening as a new practice at the school or refining the existing screening practice.

Post-Meeting Resources

1. At the end of the meeting, hand out the following screening tool selection resources for staff to examine and discuss at a future staff meeting, assessment training, or grade-level meeting:
 - *Screening Selection Worksheet* (Pennsylvania)
 - *Assessment Quality Indicators and Characteristics* (Iowa)
 - *Screening Tools Chart* (NCRTI)